Minutes
Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board
4th July 2011

Present
Brian Cutmore (Chairman) Business Council
Chris Bailey Witham Chamber of Trade
Brenda Baker Braintree Chamber of Trade
Councillor John Bendall Earls Colne Parish Council
Robert Bucknell W P Bucknell & Son
Sally Carpenter Client Act PR
Ian Cass Witham Chamber of Trade/FSB
Gail Clark Braintree Business Improvement District
Carole Fuller JCP
Dave Gronland Micromech
Jon Hayden (from 6.13pm) Braintree District Council
Councillor Tony Hayward Braintree Association of Local Councils (BALT)
Councillor David Mann Braintree District Council
Paul McCarthy Freeport Braintree
Councillor John McKee (from 6.23pm) Braintree District Council
Councillor Janet Money Braintree District Council
Zoe Myddelton Braintree District Council/Essex County Council
Councillor Lady Newton (from 6.13pm) Braintree District Council
Gen Rowell Business Development Service
Claire Swan BCT Consortium
Councillor Roger Walters Braintree District Council

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Phillip Barlow, T Comber, Drew Keavey, Ron Mitchell, Rachael Price, Linda Riley and Councillor Jenni Sutton.

Action by

1 MINUTES

DECISION: That the minutes of the meeting of the Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board held on 4th April 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2 MATTERS ARISING

INFORMATION: The following update was given:-

Minute 39 - West Tey Consortium. Councillor Lady Newton and Jon Hayden reported that they had met with representatives of the Consortium earlier that day. The representatives had been advised that the Council was unable to consider the proposals until more information was provided. This information would be made available in September 2011 and a report would be presented to a future meeting of the Board.

For further information regarding these minutes, please contact Alison Webb, Member Services on 01376 552525 Ext 2614 or e-mail alison.webb@braintree.gov.uk
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

INFORMATION: The following interest was declared:-

Councillor R G Walters declared a personal interest in Item 9 - Enterprise Allowance Scheme (Minute 8) as a Director of BEAU Limited.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

INFORMATION: Mr Brian Cutmore, Chairman of the Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board, referred to a recently announced Government proposal to alter the current system for the collection and distribution of the National Non-Domestic Rate. It was hoped that the changes would bring more benefits locally. More detail would follow in a consultation document.

DECISION: That the Chairman’s report be noted.

TOWN CENTRE SCHEMES AND ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

INFORMATION: Mr Jon Hayden, Director of Sustainable Development, provided a verbal update on the schemes to enhance Braintree, Halstead and Witham town centres. Mr Hayden reported that at its last meeting, the Council had agreed to commit to a four year enhancement strategy for the three towns.

The Braintree scheme would involve the regeneration of land to the rear of the Town Hall Centre. Henry Boot had been appointed as the preferred bidder and the company would now commence work on a detailed design and submit a planning application. The scheme would provide restaurants, shops, an hotel, additional car parking spaces and an improved bus interchange including public toilets and a waiting area.

With regard to the proposed redevelopment of land at Halstead, it was reported that the eight landowners were ready to exchange contracts with a development partner.

In respect of Witham, it was reported that the District Council was in discussion with a prospective purchaser regarding their proposals to redevelop Newlands Precinct.

DECISION: That the report be noted.

BRAINTREE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)

INFORMATION: Ms Gail Clark provided a verbal update on the Braintree Business Improvement District bid for Braintree town centre.

Ms Clark stated that the BID Team was working proactively towards achieving BID status and a comprehensive programme of activities for the next five years had been agreed. It was proposed that marketing of the town should be improved to attract visitors and increase footfall. It was also proposed to introduce a gift voucher scheme; to provide a central information point for eg. the sale of bus tickets and the provision of information about local events; an improved waste management system; and the appointment of a Town Ranger to improve security arrangements. It was proposed that the BID should be cost neutral. The levy had
been set at 1.7% of rateable value to a cap of £2,500 with an average charge of £310. It was currently anticipated that the vote on the formation of the BID would take place in September 2011.

**DECISION:** That the progress report be noted.

**7 BRAINTEER APPRENTICESHIP PROJECT AND NEET UPDATE**

**INFORMATION:** Consideration was given to a comprehensive report on the basic skills and modern apprenticeships project which had been undertaken by the Braintree, Colchester and Tendring (BCT) Consortium between July 2009 and March 2011.

It was reported that the apprenticeships process and communication between The College at Braintree, schools and employers had improved. It was noted that investment had been provided via the Local Strategic Partnership and it was queried whether this had had an impact compared to other Districts in Essex. It was agreed that this information, together with details of the number of successfully completed courses, should be reported to a future meeting of the Board.

**DECISION:** That the progress report be noted and information submitted to a future meeting on the impact of investment in the Braintree District and the number of successful completions.

**8 NEW ENTERPRISE ALLOWANCE SCHEME**

**INFORMATION:** Mrs Gen Rowell reported that the Business Development Service had submitted a bid to operate the Enterprise Allowance Scheme in the Braintree District. This new scheme had been set up by JobCentre Plus and it would enable the long-term unemployed to set up a business without losing the right to claim benefits. The outcome of the bid was awaited.

Mr Jon Hayden, Director of Sustainable Development, provided a verbal update on the proposed merger of BEAU Limited and the Business Development Service. It was reported that a successful joint workshop had been held recently. Further workshops would take place.

In discussing this item Ms Zoe Myddelton, Regeneration and Economic Development Officer, reported that a bid submitted to the Regional Growth Fund in association with the Haven Gateway had been unsuccessful. Part of this funding would have been utilised to expand the existing Enterprise Units at Springwood Industrial Estate, Braintree. However, it was hoped that funding would be made available from elsewhere to implement this scheme.

**DECISION:** That the verbal report be noted.

**9 BDUK BROADBAND SCHEME**

**INFORMATION:** Ms Zoe Myddelton, Regeneration and Economic Development Officer, presented a report on broadband development.

It was reported that stimulating investment in the United Kingdom’s broadband infrastructure was one of the Government’s priorities and Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) had been created to advance this work and to stimulate private investment. In particular, the aim was to provide investment in broadband infrastructure in those
areas of the country where the private sector, by itself, would not provide it. BDUK was engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including the communications industry, public sector bodies, OFCOM, regional bodies and community groups to achieve this:

Whilst BDUK was responsible for the national approach, it would be for local bodies to develop Broadband Plans and to involve communities, source European Union and local funding, and to define and deliver local projects.

£530 million had been made available in the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review to support the objectives of BDUK. Tier one local authorities (e.g. Essex County Council) and Local Enterprise Partnerships would be able to access this funding through a bidding process and they would have primary responsibility for ensuring the appropriate delivery of broadband in their areas. Access to funding was dependent on the development of a Local Broadband Plan.

Essex County Council had expressed an interest to BDUK for a future bid and had started to prepare a Local Broadband Plan. The County Council had requested District and Borough authorities to work with them in identifying where broadband provision currently existed and where investment was required.

It was reported that County Broadband, a Braintree based internet provider, had recently commissioned a study from the Rural Broadband Partnership on the quality of broadband infrastructure within each Parish in Essex. It was also noted that County Broadband would be holding an event on 18th July 2011 in Coggeshall which would provide additional information on the Rural Broadband Partnership report.

Further updates on local activity and the development of the Local Broadband Plan would be presented to future Partnership Board meetings.

In discussing this item, Members of the Board considered it important that future broadband providers should submit schemes covering areas as a whole, rather than separate parts.

**DECISION:** That the report be noted.

10 **LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

**INFORMATION:** The Chairman reported that no decision had been made on the future of the Local Strategic Partnership.

It was acknowledged that this matter was linked to the outcome of the Localism Bill which was currently being debated in Parliament and that the situation may not be resolved until the end of the year or, possibly, Spring 2012.

**DECISION:** That the verbal report be noted.

11 **DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

**INFORMATION:** It was noted that the next meetings of the Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board would be held on 3rd October 2011, 23rd January 2012 and 2nd April 2012 at Causeway House, Braintree starting at 6.00pm.
The next meeting of Braintree District Business Council would be held on 25\textsuperscript{th} July 2011 at The Corner House, Braintree starting at 6.00pm.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.42pm.

B CUTMORE

(Chairman)